

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 074521
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INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY
USINT BAGHDAD PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SANA PRIORITY
TREASURY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 074521

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 074521

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (LINE 5 PARA 2 OMITTED)

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 526 - MARCH 22, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

1. ISRAEL-LEBANON. THE UNILATERAL ISRAELI CEASEFIRE WENT INTO EFFECT AT 6:00 PM LOCAL TIME YESTERDAY. MOST REPORTS INDICATE THAT IT IS GENERALLY HOLDING. OUR BEST ESTIMATE, HOWEVER, IS THAT PALESTINIAN GUERRILLA UNITS WILL BE RELUCTANT TO STOP FIGHTING BEFORE ISRAELI FORCES ARE WITHDRAWN FROM ADVANCED POSITIONS, AND LIMITED CLASHES OR SHELLING COULD OCCUR AGAIN TODAY IF PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE CONTINUES. PRIOR TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEASEFIRE THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE SHELLING, BUT LESS THAN IN PREVIOUS DAYS. ISRAELI AIRCRAFT WERE MUCH LESS ACTIVE.(UNCLASSIFIED)

2. REACTIONS. THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN AMMAN SUPPORTING THE PALESTINIANS, WHICH OCCURRED MONDAY, CONTINUED ON A REDUCED SCALE YESTERDAY. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY AMMAN, JORDAN UNIVERSITY WAS CALM TUESDAY. DURING MONDAY'S DEMON-

STRATIONS, ONE PERSON REPORTEDLY WAS KILLED AND 18 INJURED. THE JORDANIAN REPORT CLAIMED THAT THE DEMONSTRATORS CRITICIZED THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT FOR FAILING TO INTERVENE IN SOUTH LEBANON. THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 074521

RECEIVED SOME CRITICISM FOR PROHIBITING VOLUNTEERS TO TRAVEL TO LEBANON TO FIGHT WITH THE PALESTINIANS. THE JORDANIANS APPEAR TO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY CONTAINED THE VIOLENT CLASHES.

3. ACCORDING TO A PALESTINIAN SOURCE OF EMBASSY DAMASCUS, THE ISRAELI ATTACK INTO SOUTH LEBANON HAS MOSTLY BENEFITED THE PALESTINIANS. THE SOURCE CLAIMED THAT IT HAS UNIFIED THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT, RESTORED PALESTINIAN SELF-CONFIDENCE, REDUCED THE IMPORTANCE OF FACTIONAL TIES WITHIN THE PLO TO THEIR VARIOUS ARAB PATRONS, THUS TEMPORARILY DIMINISHING THE RESTRAINING INFLUENCE OF THESE STATES ON THE PLO, AND ENHANCED THE CREDIBILITY OF THE PLO IN WORLD PUBLIC OPINION.

4. THE LEBANESE FRONT ISSUED A STATEMENT YESTERDAY WHICH ASSERTED THAT THE UN RESOLUTIONS ON THE SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION WERE INSUFFICIENT. THEY DO NOT "TACKLE ALL ASPECTS OF THE LEBANESE ISSUE", AND CONTINUE TO LEAVE THE BORDER OPEN TO "ALIEN FORCES" AND WEAPONS TRAFFIC. THE FRONT ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO SUBMIT ITS STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD AT THE UN; OTHERWISE, A SPECIAL DELEGATION

WILL BE SENT TO THE UN TO EXPLAIN THE CHRISTIANS' VIEWS. MEANWHILE, LEFTIST LEADER WALID JUMBLATT EXPRESSED HIS WORRY TO AMBASSADOR PARKER ABOUT PALESTINIAN PRESSURE, PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL, ON THE DRUZE COMMUNITY. THE PALESTINIANS HAD BEEN PUSHED NORTHWARD, AND WERE NOW BEGINNING TO IMPINGE ON DRUZE REGIONS. AMBASSADOR PARKER OBSERVED THAT JUMBLATT'S COMMENTS ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF A GENERAL LEBANESE DISPLEASURE OVER THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE. THIS IS THE ONLY REAL CONSENSUS IN LEBANON TODAY.

5. THE SOVIET APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON REFLECTS MOSCOW'S EFFORT TO PREVENT EVENTS THERE FROM HARMING ITS BROADER INTERESTS IN THE ARAB WORLD. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 074521

TASS CLAIMED ON MARCH 20 THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD ABSTAINED ON SUNDAY'S SECURITY COUNCIL VOTE BECAUSE THE RESOLUTION FAILED TO CONDEMN ISRAELI AGGRESSION. BUT THE TASS COMMENTARY AND REMARKS ON MARCH 19 BY V. I. ISRAELYAN, CHIEF OF THE SOVIET MFA INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DIVISION, SUGGEST THAT THE ABSTENTION WAS DICTATED BY MISGIVINGS ABOUT UNIFIL'S IMPLICATIONS FOR SOVIET INTERESTS.

6. ISRAELYAN HINTED THAT ONE MAJOR SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT THE UN FORCE IS THAT IT WILL EXERCISE POLICE FUNCTIONS IN THE AREA UNDER ITS CONTROL. HE STATED THAT THE FORCE'S MANDATE SHOULD BE LIMITED TO OBSERVING THE CEASE-FIRE, SEPARATING CONTENDING FORCES, DELIMITING BUFFER ZONES, AND ENSURING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. THIS THEME REFLECTS THE KREMLIN'S APPREHENSION THAT A BROAD MANDATE FOR THE FORCE COULD LEAD TO A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN PLO FIGHTERS AND UN TROOPS. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD PRESENT THE USSR WITH THE CHOICE OF DEFENDING THE PLO AGAINST SUPPORTERS OF THE UN FORCE, POSSIBLY INCLUDING SYRIA, OR BACKING THE UN TROOPS TO THE DETRIMENT OF SOVIET RELATIONS WITH THE PALESTINIANS.

7. AT THE SAME TIME, MOSCOW IS WORRIED THAT, AS A PERMANENT SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBER, IT MIGHT FIND ITSELF PARTY TO AN ARRANGEMENT WHICH EVENTUALLY COULD GIVE ISRAEL THE RIGHT TO PERPETUATE A UN FORCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE PLO OR SYRIA BY VETO POWER OVER ITS WITHDRAWAL. MOSCOW ALSO HAS LINGERING SUSPICIONS ABOUT ADDAD'S INTENTIONS AND IS PROBABLY DISQUIETED AT THE PROSPECT OF A UN ARRANGEMENT THAT COULD PERMIT SYRIA TO CONSOLIDATE ITS INFLUENCE OVER LEBANON AND THE PLO. (IN THE CONNECTION, ISRAELYAN INSISTED THAT THE MANDATE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 074521

FOR THE FORCE MAKE CLEAR THE UN TROOPS WOULD BE WITHDRAWN IMMEDIATELY IF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT ASKED THEM TO LEAVE AND THAT THE MANDATE "SHOULD BY NO MEANS INFRINGE UPON THE SOVEREIGN RIGHTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON.") NEVERTHELESS, SOVIET BEHAVIOR SUGGESTS THAT SYRIAN ATTITUDES ARE PLAYING THE KEY ROLE IN SHAPING SOVIET RELATIONS WITH ASSAD AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO GO ALONG WITH THE UN FORCE WERE PROBABLY DECISIVE IN OBTAINING THE USSR'S TACIT ACQUIESCENCE IN SUNDAY'S VOTE.

8. OTHER FACTORS WEIGHED HEAVILY IN SOVIET CALCULATIONS, HOWEVER. MOSCOW WAS APPARENTLY UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM ARAFAT TO ACCEPT THE UN FORCE. ARAFAT PROBABLY IS STILL UNHAPPY WITH SOVIET ACTIONS, WHICH DEMONSTRATED ONCE AGAIN THAT SOVIET RELATIONS WITH SYRIA ULTIMATELY OUTWEIGH ANY PROFFESSED "ALL ROUND SUPPORT" FOR THE PLO.

9. AT THE SAME TIME, MOSCOW'S TEMPORIZING PROBABLY WAS ALSO A FUNCTION OF LIBYAN, ALGERIAN, AND IRAQI OPPOSITION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UN FORCE. THESE STATES, HOWEVER, MAY READ SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF THE FORCE AS FURTHER INDICATION THAT THE KREMLIN IS IN ASSAD'S POCKET, IS UNWILLING TO BACK THE RADICAL OPPONENTS OF ACCOMMODATION WITH ISRAEL, AND MAY BE COLLUDING WITH THE US AT THE EXPENSE OF THE RADICALS.

10. ON THE OTHER HAND, EVEN THESE PRESSURES WERE OUTWEIGHED BY THE BROADER SOVIET INTEREST IN DAMPENING THE CURRENT STRIFE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. IN ADDITION TO THE DANGER THAT THE FIGHTING COULD SPREAD AND ULTIMATELY SPARK A GENERAL WAR, MOSCOW PROBABLY SAW THE SITUATION AS AN OBSTACLE TO ITS EFFORTS TO UNITE SADAT'S OPPONENTS AGAINST HIM. THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR FRUSTRATED MOVES TO PUT TOGETHER AN ANTI-SADAT COALITION FOLLOWING THE SINAI II AGREEMENT; IF THE LEBANESE SITUATION HEATS UP AGAIN, DISARRAY AMONG THE ARAB "PROGRESSIVES" COULD UNDO

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 06 STATE 074521

WHATEVER PROGRESS THE SOVIETS HAVE MADE AGAINST THE SADAT "INITIATIVE." (CONFIDENTIAL). VANCE

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